

programs. The region has been unable to take advantage of the usual combination of state and city matches only because this facility, which serves regional partners, happens to be located in the District of Columbia.

A permanent 80–20 federal-local match would place the District on a par with other municipalities and states in the United States. The 20 percent that the District would continue to assume is equivalent to the burden borne by many other cities in the country. Of course, local rate payers in the region would continue to bear their share.

We urge our colleagues to join us in supporting this important provision that would provide tangible benefits to regional residents and to the Potomac and Anacostia rivers, as well as the Chesapeake Bay, a national treasure.

H.R. —

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. TREATMENT WORKS IN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

Section 202(a)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1282(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following: "Notwithstanding the first sentence of this paragraph, in the case of a project for a publicly owned treatment works in the District of Columbia, such project shall be eligible for grants at 80 percent of the cost of construction thereof."

Original Cosponsors: TOM DAVIS; WAYNE T. GILCHREST; STENY H. HOYER; JAMES P. MORAN; CONSTANCE A. MORELLA; FRANK WOLF; and ALBERT RUSSELL WYNN.

CONFLICT DIAMONDS

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 21, 2001

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise our colleagues about progress made in recent days in building the consensus needed to end the trade in conflict diamonds. Today, Senators DICK DURBIN, MIKE DEWINE and RUSS FEINGOLD introduced a companion to H.R. 918, the Clean Diamonds Act, that incorporates a compromise among American jewelers and the legitimate global diamond industry on the one hand, and Senators, Members of Congress, and the 100-plus-member human-rights organization dedicated to eliminating the trade in conflict diamonds, on the other hand.

This compromise brings together elected representatives of the nation that is world's largest consumer of diamonds, the industry that markets those gems, and the respected human rights advocates who have brought the role that conflict diamonds play in the legitimate trade to American's attention.

These diverse groups united in supporting this bill in the hope that leaders of the global initiative, under way for the past year, will see in our unity a call to move beyond debating this problem, and actually devise a system capable of ending the trade in conflict diamonds—a system that many of us here today have been calling for since early 2000.

I think we all have great respect for the 30-plus countries working through the African-led "Kimberley Process" to end this blood trade; their task is a challenging one. The com-

promise legislation aims to spur to action those who want to continue exporting diamonds to our market, but the road they take must be one charted by the Kimberley Process. However, the time for more talk, more meetings of this august body, and more delay is past.

Seven months ago, the United Nations General Assembly voted unanimously to act to eradicate this scourge. Coming together was not easy for all of the world's nations. It has not been easy for those of us here today. And it won't be easy for participants at July's meetings. But a coordinated, global approach offers the only real hope of ending a trade that has fueled the wars devastating countries that are home to 70 million Africans—and that surely will spark more violence if this problem is left to fester. Today, some of the most significant stakeholders in the Kimberly Process' work banded together to call for swift follow-through on December's unanimous directive from the United Nations.

I hope history will judge this to be a turning point—the moment that Americans' representatives in the faith, humanitarian and human rights communities, as well as their elected officials, joined hands with the industry that brings us one of the many African resources that make our lives sweet; the point at which we began working together on an issue of life-or-death importance to African people and communities.

This work entails more than introduction or a passage of the legislation, and more than implementation of a global regulatory scheme. To achieve lasting success, this work requires us to find a way to not merely break the curse that diamonds too often have been—but to transform diamonds into a blessing for all of the communities that mine them.

Diamonds are the most concentrated form of wealth mankind has ever known—so it is an intolerable irony that they do precious little to enrich many of the communities where they are mined: places which are located atop diamond-rich soil but nevertheless rank among the poorest and most miserable in the world, places like Kenema in Sierra Leone, where nearly one child in three dies before his first birthday, even in years that see little fighting for control of its diamonds. As long as conditions like this persist, as long as there are few alternatives for Kenema's people to careers begun as child soldiers, as long as diamond mines are an easy target for criminal takeovers, it is doubtful that stricter customs laws alone will be capable of holding back the violence bred of this despair.

I am heartened that the Diamond Dealers Club of New York is continuing an initiative launched by my friend, Mayer Herz. It will directly link Sierra Leone miners with American retailers, and reinvest more of the dollars American spend on diamonds in the African communities that produce them. I would like to see more joint ventures like that, and I encourage other responsible members of the legitimate diamond industry to follow this example.

I want to express my appreciation for the work that today's compromise represents to the Senate leaders, who bring tremendous energy and capabilities to this work, to the diamond industry, and to the non-governmental organizations.

Matthew Runci, of Jewelers of America, and Eli Izhakoff, of the World Diamond Council have done superb work bringing together the

very different members of the diamond industry, and then bringing them to the negotiating table with critics. I commend them for their constructive work on this compromise and thank them in advance for their help winning enactment of it, a commitment that was a critical part of their offer to work together.

As valuable as the industry's efforts have been, the Campaign to Eliminate Conflict Diamonds is the real father of this success. The human rights activists and members of the humanitarian and faith communities who launched that campaign, along with the organizations they represent, have done heroic work that has brought us to this point.

First, they have catapulted this issue into the consciousness of Americans who never give Africans a thought otherwise—and made many people think for the first time about what our sparkly tokens of love and commitment symbolize to many people at the other end of the supply chain.

Second, they have worked with the industry at every level to convince jewelers and industry leaders alike of the urgent need for an effective and immediate solution. That required standing up to a powerful industry while simultaneously remaining flexible enough to work with it when the situation warranted that.

Third, they have persuaded a quarter of our nation's elected representatives, one by one, to support this call for clean diamonds—a call that until today put Members of Congress on the side of faraway African victims and at odds with jewelers in every Congressional district.

And last, they have done all this without resorting to the easy answers and hype that could destroy consumer confidence in diamonds and devastate the economies of the countries they benefit.

It took too long to get to this day, but it would not have come without these organizations and individuals, particularly Holly Burkhalter, Adotei Akwei, Amanda Blair, Rory Anderson, Bernice Romero, Ann Wang and Danielle Hirsch. They are a dedicated and tireless group, and I commend their commitment to this compelling human rights cause.

It is with pleasure that I submit for inclusion in the Congressional Record the joint statement by the World Diamond Council and the steering committee of the Campaign to Eliminate Conflict Diamonds. It calls on Congress to pass the Clean Diamonds Act this year, and on President Bush to sign it into law, and I commend it to my colleagues' attention.

If we heed this call, we can make today the milestone it has the potential to be, the moment history marks as the beginning of diamonds' transformation, from a curse on too many Africans, to a blessing for all the people whose lives they touch. I urge my colleagues to give this call the serious consideration it deserves, and to seize this historic opportunity.

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE WORLD DIAMOND COUNCIL AND THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE CONFLICT DIAMONDS

The World Diamond Council and the non-governmental community represented by Physicians for Human Rights, Amnesty International, OxfamAmerica, World Vision, World Relief and the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism support the Clean Diamonds Act being introduced today in the Senate. This legislation will create a system to prohibit the U.S. import of conflict diamonds and impose serious penalties on those who trade in them.